

3127 Ramzi Lane
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
December 11, 2016

Dear MACUL Award Committee:

I am delighted to share a recommendation letter for my friend and former colleague, Craig McBain, for the MACUL Digital Leadership Award. Craig is currently serving as Director of Technology for Chippewa Valley Schools, one of the largest school districts in the state of Michigan. As such, Craig supervises all district technology implementation and provides support to approximately 1,800 teachers and over 16,000 students. The scope of his job would be daunting to someone lacking Craig's knowledge, experience, and charisma.

Over the past 11 years, Craig has provided these services with a focus on innovative support for classroom instruction. As a former classroom teacher, he understands well the role technology plays in engaging students, increasing teacher productivity, and providing instructional support. He would be the first to tell you that it's all about technology supporting instruction- not the other way around.

Examples of his leadership include his role as an expert in the county for Microsoft in Education. Chippewa Valley Schools partnered with Microsoft to provide one of the first Office 365 environments for teachers and students. He welcomed MISD consultants to come and "test drive" the experience, and hosted a visit from representatives of our statewide REMC Instructional Technology Specialists (RITS) to visit classrooms, talk to teachers, and experience the integrated Microsoft environment at work. Chippewa Valley Schools is one of the few districts in the state previewing Student Data Sync and Microsoft Classroom.

As an MIE leader, Craig invests personal time into staying current with the latest tips and tricks for utilizing the platform. He publishes a blog with his findings for teachers and staff, runs webinars to assist teachers in getting the most from the technology, and presents around the state (including MACUL) and nationally at ISTE to share the experiences and encourage others on the same path. Craig models the joy of professional learning. By researching and testing what is possible himself, he communicates his excitement through the many channels he uses to reach staff and students. He maintains a constant professional presence on Twitter and blogs his tips and tricks when he is not emailing staff members with information.

Craig has a great deal of experience leading the way with teacher professional development. He utilizes innovative models to roll out district initiatives (train the trainer, webinars, and even arranging released time for talented staff to serve as coaches and role models when new technology is deployed). Whether rolling out SMART technologies, "Classroom of the Future" initiatives, Office 365, or any new technology procedures/software/hardware, you will find Craig hard at work canvassing the district at staff meetings to provide updates, working with technology coaches, creating videos, running webinars, coordinating professional development days, etc. all while being the "buck stops here" guy for the seamless behind the scenes deployment of the network and the technology in Chippewa Valley Schools. Craig was one of the first "One Note Avengers," and like other super heroes, he won't hesitate to grab the cape and tights and bring the solution to any situation forward.

When the time comes to update technology and provide students with new opportunities, Craig will be on the front lines promoting, explaining, and working tirelessly on development of bond issues, running Technology Open House opportunities for the community, and sharing the benefits of using technology to support teachers and students in every way possible.

What I have not mentioned yet in this letter is Craig's impish personality and sense of humor. No matter what situation arises, he has a way of putting a positive spin on it and delivering messages to thousands of staff members with humor, grace, and good common sense. While we all know it is impossible to "please all of the people all of the time," Craig's strong work ethic and his generous personality deliver strong customer-focused service to teachers and students in Macomb County. Many of the teachers in the district get a big charge out of his emails—no matter what the message, it will be delivered in a manner that delights and engages the recipient.

It has been my pleasure to work with Craig both as one of "his" teachers in Chippewa Valley, one of his coaches and trainers, as well as serving as Technology Curricular Leader under his direction. I now have the pleasure of working with him in my current role at MISD providing technology support to Macomb County teachers. I have no hesitation in providing a recommendation for you to strongly consider naming him as MACUL Digital Leadership Award. His ongoing work in Chippewa Valley, his commitment to sharing his knowledge with other educators from around the state, and his continuous efforts to expand the use of technology in innovative ways to engage students and support instruction are a testimony to his effectiveness in Chippewa Valley Schools.

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best,

Jan Harding
Instructional Technology Consultant, MISD
586-228-3417